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"...a net...cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind." Matthew 13:47 Number 2

DO OR DONE—It is estimated that there are around 10,000 religions in the world, but the truth is they break down into just two categories. The first is comprised of those who demand performance (DO). The other category is summarized by the word DONE. Membership in the "done" category comes about by being given the gift of eternal life by God. Since it is a gift, it cannot be earned or deserved. Jesus has done and paid all to redeem us. It is FINISHED!

I don't know who said this, but when they wrote of two religions they spoke the truth.

- "One religion is of Cain, the other of Abel.
- One is of Ishmael, the other of Isaac.
- One is of Esau, the other of Jacob.
- One is of the Law, the other of Promise.
- One is of Mount Sinai, the other of Mount Calvary.
- One condemns, the other finds no fault.
- One leads to bondage, the other to freedom.
- One is of weakness, the other of power.
- One of merit, the other of mercy.
- One of works, the other of grace.
- One is by trying the other is by trusting.
- One is the religion of Do; the other religion is DONE."

There is not a single thing the unbeliever can do to please God for they that are in the flesh cannot please God (Romans 8:8). All the unbeliever's trying to get right with and impress God is useless. We are not called to "try" something; we are called to trust. Christ ascended into heaven because His work of atonement was finished (DONE).

As CB radio operators finish their transmission with "10-4", Christians can say Romans 10:4, because He has finished His work. Romans 10:4, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth."* Done!

VALUE OF THEIR BLOOD—The demand for horseshoe crab blood for vaccine and drug testing has contributed to crab population declines. Some fear that the crabs will be pushed to the brink of extinction because of the value of their blood to the pharmaceutical industry. Horseshoe crab blood provides a natural source of limulus amebocyte lysate (LAL) which is used to test vaccines, drugs, and medical devices to ensure that they aren't contaminated with dangerous bacterial toxins called endotoxins. High demand for the compound can cause a quart of LAL to sell for \$15,000 or more. Hundreds of thousands of horseshoe crabs are captured and bled of their milky-blue blood each year and although they are eventually returned to the sea, it is estimated that up to thirty percent of them die in the process. Populations both in the U.S. and worldwide have plummeted in recent decades. Delaware Bay, home to the largest population of

horseshoe crabs in the U.S. has seen numbers decline from 1.24 million in 1990 to less than 334,000 in 2002. (No statistics available for two decades later.)

A substitute compound named rFC is lab-produced and is an alternate to LAL. Manufacturers could produce more rFC, which could lower the cost of production and make it less expensive than LAL. Critics maintain that rFC needs further study and testing to prove that it is completely safe in taking the place of the "real" blood.

This brings to mind that in a spiritual sense many today continue to substitute things for the "real" blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, that paid the debt of our sin. While horseshoe crab blood may have a lab-made substitute, there is no substitute for the "real" blood of our Lord Jesus Christ. Only the "real" blood will be accepted for our sins. *"...the blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin" (1 John 1:7).*

LAGGING BEHIND—An old, worn out, barnacled fisherman told this true story to a congregation to encourage them to stay close to God.

The year was about 1929, and the place was south Alabama on Hog Island. The old man began to spin his tale about how his fisherman dad got the old shotgun and proceeded to take a walk into the woods, looking for squirrels (we really eat them here, and they are not rats). The dad agreed to allow his six-year-old to accompany him.

The father's one rule was that the son stay close behind him. This worked well for a while. Many interesting things were on the ground that drew the attention of the son, and before long the father was a great distance away. He called for his son to quickly catch up, but soon the same scenario repeated itself, with the son lagging behind. This time, lying on the ground a bit off the trail, was a troubling circumstance, and sure enough, the son's bare foot stepped right in the trouble. In the blink of an eye the cottonmouth moccasin struck and a massive amount of venom was injected in the top of the son's small foot. His screams were heard by his father who came quickly and saw the situation, picking up the son and running fast to the house. The father applied a tourniquet, then ran down to the river to get into a small rowboat, crossing the river and running for the only telephone in the entire area. The doctor was summoned, but had to come by an old model T (or A) car, slowly from the nearest town. It seemed forever, but the doctor finally arrived, got into the rowboat and was ferried across the river, arriving at the fisherman's house. The child now had a horrendous fever, but somehow God had mercy. The child's life was spared.

The old man telling the story now is struggling to keep his mind on the purpose of presenting such a

tale. He bows his head, takes a few deep breaths, then proceeds to explain.

"I was that boy, and I followed afar off! If I had stayed close to my dad on the trail and had not played around off the beaten path, I would have never been bitten. I saw my dad weep as he observed my hurt. He said numerous times, 'Why did you not stay close like I told you?'"

Then the old man, telling the story like a preacher finishing his sermon, gave his invitation. "There is a heavenly father; we must walk close to him. Following His steps assures us of safety. We dare not get far away. Satan (the real serpent) is coiled ready to inflict his dangerous poison of sin. The wages of sin is death (Romans 6:23)."

The father hurts when we go astray. His guiding hand is always available. "*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you...*" (James 4:8).

My friend, where are you in your relationship to the Lord? Get close behind him. Can't you hear His voice? A great fisherman of old had the same story to tell. What happened when distance got between the Saviour and Simon Peter? Matthew 26:58a, 69-75, "*But Peter followed his afar off...Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with Jesus of Galilee. But he denied before them all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another maid saw him, and said unto them that were there, This fellow was also with Jesus of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech betrayeth thee. Then began he to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man. And immediately the cock crew. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.*"

The enemy is smart to use the world to lure us off the beaten path into the serpent's realm. Beware lest any distance come between. **Don't lag behind!**

JUST ASKING—Do you thank God daily for blessings? Are you always willing to forgive? Do you search the scriptures when confronted with a problem? Are you grateful enough to witness to others? Have you learned to live one day at a time? Do you cast all your burdens on the Lord instead of worrying? Are you a steward of time and money? If God calls upon you to give something up, do you do it willingly? Do you begin and end each day with prayer? How real is heaven to you? 2 Corinthians 13:5, "*Examine yourselves...prove your own selves...*"

FISHY QUESTION—Last edition's question must have been too hard---we only got one response! Those real animals were porcupine, armadillo, kangaroo, alligator, gorilla, badger, anteater, and lion. This edition the question is a brain teaser also. Who was considered the smartest man in the Bible? (And this answer is not Solomon.) Remember, it is a brain teaser!

A FISHERMAN'S TESTIMONY—I was the oldest of three children born in a fisherman's home in south Alabama. My father was a hard worker, providing as he could a living out of the water. Our home was simple, but sufficient to meet

our needs. My mother saw that we were fed and clothed and the house well taken care of. I remember wearing some shirts that she made from some chicken feed sacks. At the time I was ashamed, but now I wish I could go back and say, "Thank you, Mama."

My parents were church-going people. Sunday was the day for church. Nothing else stood in the way. Until we got a car we always went by boat—no matter the weather. I suppose we were above-average church members, but sad to say that is all we were.

The seafood industry always fascinated me. I began as a very small boy to throw a cast net, to catch crabs, to gig flounders, and to tong oysters. During the summer I would work with my dad on a shrimp trawler, learning responsibility and hard work. During the winter as a teenager, after school I would work with a friend and his dad at an oyster house. Really the water and its products were all I was interested in. The friends I chose in school, sad to say, were not the best. I began to learn the ways of the world while still staying a "good" church member. From there a very unusual thing happened. My dad first, then my mother, talked of having gotten what they called "saved". They both said they had been hypocrites—only playing church—and now their life had changed. They started reading the Bible and established a prayer life. They asked me if I was sure that I was saved. That really made me mad. I figured they were confused and turned them off. After a series of circumstances that was God-ordered, I began to seek the God they talked about, only in my way. I turned over new leaves, made commitments and resolutions that were soon to be broken. I remember while trying to sleep hearing my dad in the engine room of the boat, praying that God would save me. My way just did not bring results (it never will). I tried to bargain with God. He wasn't impressed. Soon I was exposed to the scriptural view of salvation. Little did I know that Jesus had completed salvation's plan. He had died for my sins. He could be my Saviour by faith. On January 2, 1966, I asked Him to forgive me for my sins and I received Him as my personal Saviour. Oh, the change! Now He was in control. Instead of me trying to reform, He transformed me and made me a new creature. He can do the same for you. Today I stand, not perfect, but forgiven. Since that time it has been exciting serving the Lord. Many a storm has come, but He always calms the waters. I highly recommend him to you. Are you just a church member? Going to church will no more make you a Christian than going into a garage will make you a mechanic. Christ makes the difference. AWM/1985

FISHY HUMOR

--A man down the street says that his wife is such a poor driver that the police gave her a season ticket.

--"Movie cowboys mystify me," said the old fisherman. "How can they jump off a porch roof and onto a horse, and still sing in a normal voice?"

--The latest appliance on the market is a combination record player and air conditioner. It is designed for people who like to play it cool.

--Why do they say "Amen" at the end of a prayer instead of "Awomen"? The same reason they sing Hymns instead of Hers!

--Typos create some interesting situations. Here are some typos that were actually published.

1) It must cost an arm and a ldkfj.

2) I hear he is toadally a great player.

3) Amphibious pitcher makes debut.

4) Human brian is still evolving, says scientist.

5) We three kings of Orient are; bearing golf we traverse afar.